

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An implant for stabilizing skeletal bone across a discontinuity comprising a plate having a first end and a second end with an intermediate length to span a discontinuity and a width to accommodate at least one screw hole in each of said first end and said second end, the width of said intermediate length being less than said width of said first end and said second end, said plate including a thickness with a proximal surface for contacting a bone and an opposite distal surface, said plurality of screw holes extending through said thickness for accepting bone screws, said plurality of screw holes each having an enlarged depression in said distal surface, each said depression having a continuous sidewall connected to a bottom wall between said proximal and said distal surfaces, each said screw hole and each said depression having a longitudinal axis, a plurality of bone screws with external threads adapted to penetrate said plurality of screw holes, said bone screws each having an enlarged heads adapted to engage said bottom of each said depressions whereby said bone screws are inserted

through said plate and adapted to threadably engage said bone to stabilize the bone across the discontinuity whereby said discontinuity may be observed through said intermediate length during implantation and, said first and second end each contain a slot, each said slot formed as a cavity enclosed between said proximal and distal surfaces forming a cavity having a thickness length and width, wherein each said length and width are defined by substantially planar upper and lower surfaces, said upper and lower surfaces being substantially parallel to said proximal and distal surfaces, the dimension of said thickness of each said slot being less than the dimension of said length of each said slot, and the dimension of said thickness of each said slot being less than the dimension of said width of each said slot.

2. (Previously Presented) An implant of claim 1 wherein said longitudinal axis of each said screw hole and each depression on said first end diverges from said longitudinal axis of each said screw hole on the first end and each said screw hole and each said depression on said second end diverges from said longitudinal axis of each said screw hole on the second end.

3. (Original) An implant of claim 2 wherein each said plurality of bone screws has one internal diameter, said plurality of bone screws each have a fluted proximal end.

4. (Original) An implant of claim 3 wherein said longitudinal axis of each said screw hole and each depression on said one end diverges from said longitudinal axis of each said screw hole and each said depression on said second end.

5. (Previously Presented) An implant of claim 1 wherein each of said slots extending through said sidewall of each of said depressions, a screw lock slidably disposed in each of said slots whereby said screw lock may be slid into said depressions to prevent back out.

6. (Previously Presented) An implant of claim 5 wherein said slot in said first end and said second end extends through a side wall formed between said proximal and distal surfaces of said first end and said second end, said screw lock is in the form of an elongated body with a narrow central extension formed between two longitudinal slots, said extension passing through said side wall whereby said screw lock may be removed.

7. (Original) An implant of claim 2 wherein said first end and said second end each have a slot between said proximal and said distal surfaces, each of said slots extending through said sidewall of each of said depressions, a screw lock slidably disposed in each of said slots whereby said screw lock may be slid into said depressions to prevent back out.

8. (Original) An implant of claim 3 wherein said first end and said second end each have a slot between said proximal and said distal surfaces, each of said slots extending through said sidewall of each of said depressions, a screw lock slidably disposed in each of said slots whereby said screw lock may be slid into said depressions to prevent back out.

9. (Original) An implant of claim 4 wherein said first end and said second end each have a slot between said proximal and said distal surfaces, each of said slots extending through said sidewall of each of said depressions, a screw lock slidably disposed in each of said slots whereby said screw lock may be slid into said depressions to prevent back out.

10. (Original) An implant of claim 9 wherein said first end and said second end each have at least two screw holes.

11. (Original) An implant of claim 5 wherein said first end and said second end each have at least two screw holes.

12. (Currently Amended) A spinal stabilization system for an anterior cervical fixation of two adjacent vertebrae comprising a rigid plate having a first end, a second end and an intermediate length to span the intervertebral space, said first end and said second end each having a width, said intermediate length having a lesser width, said intermediate length asymmetrically connected to said first end and said second end, said rigid plate having a proximal surface for contact with vertebrae and an opposite distal surface, a plurality of screw holes in said first end and a plurality of screw holes in said second end, each of said plurality of screw holes countersunk with a depression, said depression having a continuous side wall connected to a bottom between said proximal surface and said distal surface, a plurality of bone screws engaging said screw holes, said bone screws having an enlarged head engaging said bottom, said first end and said second end each have a slot between said proximal and said distal surfaces, said slot in the first end and said slot in the second end each ~~formed as a cavity enclosed between said proximal and distal surfaces,~~ forming a cavity having a thickness length and width, wherein

each said length and width are defined by substantially planar  
upper and lower surfaces, said upper and lower surfaces being  
substantially parallel to said proximal and distal surfaces, the  
dimension of said thickness of each said slot being less than  
the dimension of said length of each said slot, and the  
dimension of said thickness of each said slot being less than  
the dimension of said width of each said slot, each of said  
slots extending through said sidewall of each of said  
depressions, a screw lock slidably disposed in each of said  
slots whereby said screw lock may be slid into said depressions  
to contact said bone screw heads whereby said locking screws are  
prevented from backing-out of said plate. .

13. (Previously Presented) A spinal stabilization system  
of claim 12 wherein said plurality of screw holes and each said  
depressions have a longitudinal axis through said plate, said  
longitudinal axis of said plurality of screw holes on said first  
end diverging from said longitudinal axis of one another said  
longitudinal axis of said plurality of screw holes on said  
second end diverging from said longitudinal axis of one another.

14. (Original) A spinal stabilization system of claim 12 wherein a plurality of bone screws each have a leading end and a distal end, said leading end having flutes.

15. (Original) A spinal stabilization system of claim 12 wherein said plurality of bone screws each have a leading end and a distal end, said leading end being reduced in diameter, said exterior threads adapted to engage a vertebra.

16. (Previously Presented) A spinal stabilization system of claim 12 wherein said slot in said first end and said second end extends through a side wall formed between said proximal and distal surfaces of said first end and said second end, said screw lock is in the form of an elongated body with a narrow central extension formed between two longitudinal slots, said extension passing through said side wall of said first end and said second end, whereby said screw lock may be removed.

17. (Original) A spinal stabilization system of claim 12 wherein said plate is curved to reduce the silhouette.